

Message Text

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ACTION H-01

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O R 142317Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6339

INFO JCS WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP (JAVITS, JACOB K.)

SUBJECT: SENATOR JAVITS' VISIT TO PANAMA

REF: USIS PANAMA USINFO JANUARY 12, 1976

SUMMARY: THE JANUARY 9-10 VISIT OF SENTAOR JAVITS WENT VERY WELL. IT WAS HELPFUL TO US IN THAT THE SENATOR OUTLINED VERY CLEARLY FOR PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS THE CURRENT MOOD IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND PUBLIC. THE SENATOR EXPRESSED STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE KISSINGER-TACK PRINCIPLES AND SAID HE BELIEVED THE SENATE WOULD APPROVE A JUST TREATY WHICH IMPLEMENTED THOSE PRINCIPLES. HE COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE SENATRE WOULD PROBABLY NOT ACT ON A TREATY DURING 1976, IF A TREATY WERE SIGNED SOON IT MIGHT BE A GOOD THING FOR IT TO BE DEBATED DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. AMERICANS ARE FAIR AND JUST PEOPLE. THEY WOULD, IN HIS VIEW, ACCEPT A GOOD TREATY DESPITE THE DETERMINED EFFORTS OF TREATY OPPONENTS. HE ALSO MADE CLEAR TO PANAMANIAN THAT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF AMERICANS HAD NO GUILT FEELINGS ABOUT PANAMA AS THEY DID ABOUT VIET NAM AND THEREFORE

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RASH ACTS BY PANAMA OR CONFRONTATION WOULD BE COUNTER-

PRODUCTIVE. CONFRONTATION WOULD CAUSE THE US PUBLIC TO "DIG IN" AND REFUSE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. THE SENATOR STRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT WITH THE DECLINE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE UNITED STATES WOULD TURN MORE TO REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THAT LATIN AMERICA WOULD BE THE LOGICAL PLACE FOR NEW INITIATIVES. STANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BETTER RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA, HOWEVER, WAS THE CANAL ISSUE. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE SOLVED BEFORE MOVING TO OTHER MATTERS. FAILURE TO SOLVE IT COULD SET THE PROCESS BACK 20 YEARS. END SUMMARY.

1. SENATOR JAVITS' VISIT TO PANAMA JANUARY 9 AND 10 WENT SMOOTHLY AND, IN OUR VIEW, WAS VERY USEFUL. AN INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE PANAMANAIANS GAVE THE VISIT WAS THE FACT THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS SPENT AN HOUR AND A HALF WITH THE SENATOR ON JANUARY 9 WHEN THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1964 RIOTS WAS BEING OBSERVED AND AMID LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS FOR HIS VISIT TO CUBA WHICH BEGAN EARLY JANUARY 10. EVEN THOUGH THE VISIT WAS COMPETING FOR ATTENTION WITH THE JANUARY 9 EVENTS AND TORRIJOS CUBA TRIP IT RECEIVED FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN NEWSPAPERS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE VISIT. THE SENATOR'S REMARKS AT PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 10 WERE REPORTED BY PANAMA USINFO 1/12/76.

2. THE SENATOR, ACCOMPANIED BY STAFF ASSISTANT FRANK BALANCE, HAD MEETINGS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF PANAMANAIS INCLUDING GENERAL TORRIJOS AND MINISTER-NEGOTIATOR TACK. HE ALSO HAD MEETINGS WITH GOVERNOR PARFITT AND GENERAL MCAULIFFE AND MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFF. COPIES OF A FULL SCHEDULE AND NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS ARE BEING POUCHED ARA/PAN.

3. SOME KEY POINTS MADE BY THE SENATOR DURING HIS MEETINGS WERE:

A. HE IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE TACK-KISSINGER DECLARATION OF 8 PRINCIPLES. IF THE NEGOTIATIONS PRODUCE A TREATY ALONG THE LINES OF THE 8 PRINCIPLES, IT PROBABLY WOULD BE APPROVED IN THE SENATE. SOME OF THE 37 SENATORS WHO SIGNED THE THURMOND RESOLUTION WOULD SUPPORT A FAIR AND JUST TREATY. THE SENATOR ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT EVEN HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD NOT SUPPORT JUST ANY TREATY. IT WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR KEEPING THE CANAL OPEN, EFFICIENT, SECURE AND NEUTRAL AND BE FAIR AND BALANCED AS ARE THE 8 PRINCIPLES.

B. ALTHOUGH THE SENATE WOULD NOT FOCUS ON RATIFICATION OF A TREATY DURING 1976, IF A TREATY WERE TO BE INITIATED BY MID-YEAR, SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PUBLICIZING IT AND ENCOURAGING OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE

ISSUES IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. REASON AND LOGIC ARGUE THAT A NEW TREATY ARRANGEMENT WITH PANAMA WOULD BE IN THE UNITED STATES INTEREST. A DRAFT TREATY ALONG THE LINES OF THE 8 PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE DEFENDABLE. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, IF EXPOSED TO THE FACTS, WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A TREATY.

C. TORRIJOS' CUBA VISIT IN ITSELF SHOULD NOT HURT US-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS OR SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, BUT IT WOULD HAVE SOME ADVERSE EFFECT. FOR EXAMPLE, HE JUDGED THAT HIS VISIT TO CUBA IN 1974 HAD COST HIM SOME VOTES. CUBA, BY BECOMING INVOLVED MILITARILY IN ANGOLA, HAD DESTROYED CHANCES FOR A THAW IN US-CUBAN RELATIONS DURING 1976. THE SENATOR TOLD PANAMANIANS HE SENSED THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS WAS AWARE OF THE DANGERS INVOLVED IN VISITING CUBA AND WOULD AVOID THEM.

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ACTION H-01

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O R 142317Z JAN 76
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INFO JCS WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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D. IN DESCRIBING THE MOOD OF THE CONGRESS AND THE US PUBLIC, THE SENATOR FIRMLY ASSERTED THAT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF AMERICANS HAVE NO GUILT FEELINGS ABOUT THE CANAL OR PANAMA. THEY DO NOT REGARD THE UNITED STATES PRESENCE IN PANAMA AS BEING A COLONIAL ONE. THEREFORE, WERE PANAMA TO PROVOKE CONFRONTATION, THE US PUBLIC WOULD "DIG IN THEIR HEELS" AND DEFEND THE STATUS QUO. IT WOULD BACK WHATEVER MEASURES THE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE TO COUNTER PANAMANIAN ACTION REGARDLESS OF THE WORLD-WIDE POLITICAL PROBLEM THAT WOULD ARISE. THIS WOULD SET BACK US RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA FOR 20 YEARS, BUT SUCH WAS THE MOOD OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION NOW.

E. THE UNITED STATES HAS TRADITIONALLY NOT PAID ENOUGH ATTENTION TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA, BUT THE TIME IS NOW RIPE FOR A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE DISILLUSIONED WITH THEIR EXPERIENCES IN ASIA AND CAN NOT LOOK FORWARD TO EXERCISING DECISIVE LEADERSHIP THERE. AFRICA IF PROBLEMATIC AT BEST. AMERICANS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT TURNING TOWARD ISOLATIONISM. THEY NEED AN AREA OF THE WORLD TOWARD WHICH THEY CAN DIRECT THEIR ATTENTION AND ENERGIES IN A CREATIVE MANNER. THE LOGICAL AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AVAILABLE AREA IS LATIN AMERICA. THE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE SHOULD MOVE TO EXERCISE CREATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE HEMISPHERE. THE US LEGISLATIVE BRANCH WOULD SUPPORT IT IN DOING SO.

F. BEFORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND HEALTHY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA CAN BE ACHIEVED, A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY ENCOMPASSING THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES MUST BE CONCLUDED. SUCH A TREATY WILL BE THE SINE QUA NON FOR GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA. THE TREATY SHOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS OF OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA AND CENTRAL AMERICA WHICH ARE DEPENDENT UPON THE CANAL.

G. TENSIONS AMONG AMERICANS IN THE ZONE ARE VERY HIGH. THE SENATOR SAID HE FELT THIS TENSION WAS JUST AS MUCH OF A THREAT TO THE NEGOTIATIONS AND US-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS AS WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF DISTURBANCES BY PANAMANIAN STUDENTS. THE SENATOR SUGGESTED THAT SOME WAY BE FOUND TO REDUCE THESE TENSIONS; PERHAPS THE US GOVERNMENT COULD DEVELOP A SET OF PRINCIPLES--SIMILAR TO THE 8 POINTS AGREEMENT--DIRECTED AT THE CONCERNS OF CANAL EMPLOYEES AND IN THIS WAY PROVIDE SOME REASSURANCE.

4. DURING HIS OFFICE ON MINISTER BARLETTA, SENATOR JAVITS SHOWED GREAT INTEREST IN INTERIM ACTIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT TAKE TO FACILITATE PANAMA'S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT. BARLETTA TOLD HIM OF SEVEN OR EIGHT PENDING PANAMANIAN REQUESTS THAT THE US WAS NOW STUDYING. THE SENATOR ASKED WHY THE UNITED STATES HAD NOT TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN TURNING OVER NEW FRANCE FIELD. THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN OBTAINING LEGISLATION WHILE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY

AND REASONS WHY PANAMANIAN OBJECT TO LICENSING PROCEDURES WERE OUTLINED BY EMBOFF. STAFF DEL BALANCE STAYED FOR ANOTHER HOUR OF TALK WITH BARLETTA AFTER SENATOR AND EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR DEPARTED.

5. COMMENT: THE SENATOR PROJECTED A VERY POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD PANAMA AND THE NEED FOR A NEW TREATY. IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY AND US MILITARY OFFICIALS AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WELL AS WITH PANAMANIAN, HE STRESSED THE POINT THAT THE TIME WAS RIPE FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TOTURN TOWARD LATIN AMERICA. ITS MANY NATURAL TIES WITH THE AREA SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED. HE STRESSED WITH US AS WELL AS PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS HIS VIEW THAT CONFRONTATION WITH PANAMA OVER THE CANAL ISSUE COULD SET BACK US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS FOR 20 YEARS. LEADERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA SHOULD STRIVE TO AVOID SUCH A SITUATION. THE SENATOR'S EMPHASIS THAT A NEW TREATY MUST BE A BALANCED ONE AND PROTECT UNITED STATES INTERESTS AND HIS ASERTION THAT CONFRONTATION WOULD ONLY MAKE THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC STUBBORN AND ANGRY WERE, IN OUR VIEW ALSO VERY HELPFUL; HE HELPED REINFORCE ARGUMENTS EMBASSY HAS BEEN MAKING ABOUT NECESSITY FOR A BALANCED TREATY.

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